measures for removing the evils complained of.

Reply.—The contract seems to have been given to outside companies owing to the want of sufficient demand here. Government regret that, until the expiry of the present contract which lasts for five years more, they are unable to do anything in the matter, so far as the water depots included in this contract are concerned. The other depots are, of course, open to the general public. The suggestions made by the last speaker will be considered when the time for it comes.

125. Permission to the ryots to take from the forests, free of charge, manure leaves and timber required for making agricultural implements.

Mr. M. Madhavan Tampi (*Kalkulam*) observed that this was one of the subjects brought up at the last session of the Assembly when it was prayed that people might be either permitted to cut trees for this purpose free of charge or take the requisite timber from Sirkar depôts on payment of actual expense. Permission should also be given for gathering manure leaves *gratis*. The member understood that orders had been recently issued for setting apart some tracts from which manure leaves could be freely collected, but wished that the public might be informed as to what these tracts were.

Reply.—No general provision can be made, but wherever necessary and feasible, Government will consider the desirability of reducing the number of reserved trees or moving back the boundaries of reserves for the benefit of the agricultural population in particular localities.

IV. Communications.

126. Close scrutiny of the Public Works Department estimates.

Mr. K. S. Shanmukham Pillai (*Agricultural Improvement Association, South Travancore*) remarked that the present scrutiny by Government of estimates submitted by the Public Works Department was not sufficient.

Reply.—In professional matters, it is neither seemly nor desirable to interfere with such estimates which have passed through several professional hands under the control of the responsible head of the department. Where, however, the scheme or estimate appears

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too costly or in excess of requirements, revision is called for and will be exercised.

127. Sanction of budget allotments for the Public Works Department in proportion to the extent and population of each taluk.

Mr. K. C. Mamman Mappillay, B. A., (Kottayam) said that the Kottayam Division had been very much neglected in the matter of public works. The claims of this division upon the attention of Government were as strong as those of others, if not stronger, viewed either from the standpoint of area or population, total assessment collected or the urgency of the need for public works. He suggested that a definite scheme might be formulated by Government and kept in view, in apportioning the annual allotment for the Public Works Department among the different divisions of the State. Urgent works might claim the first attention in all cases. A committee of expert and impartial officers might be appointed on the lines of the Irrigation Commission of British India to enquire and report what Marahmut works were required immediately for each division and in what order they should be taken up by the Public Works Department.

Mr. Chithira Nal Tampuran of Vadakumkur, Vaikam (Nominated) stated that if a fair proportion of the allotment for public works could be systematically expended in Vaikam, Shertallay and other much neglected taluks of the Kottayam Division for the next ten years, there would not be much room for popular complaint thereafter.

Mr. K. C. Eapen, B. A., (Kshemathalpara Samajam, Kadapra, Tiruvallah) observed that the money expended on public works in the plains was disproportionately small, when compared with the amount allotted for the High Ranges, and that the Quilon and Kottayam divisions were even more neglected in this respect than the other two divisions. The people of Central Travancore suffered much for want of good roads and an equitable distribution of public funds in this matter was what the people most earnestly prayed for.

Mr. Varkey Oothuppu (Ettumanur) and Mr. N. Kesavan Valiathan (Kartigapalli) also spoke on the subject.

Reply.—No general rule can be laid down. Government give the subject their most careful consideration and distribute the allotments in accordance with the importance and urgency of the works

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